

The Associated Press

hits a first-inning single against the Mariners in last night's Yankees season opener in opening day nationally, with the Mets playing in San Diego. SEE STORY, PAGE D1

cleared in Club Bene death

ents were upset. "Be the father of the South "Be proud that your son son."

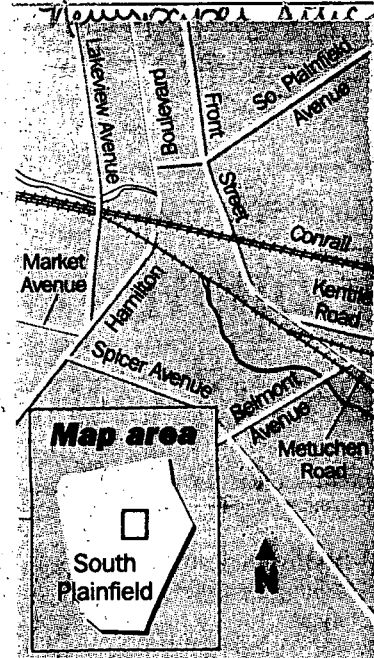
ers quickly stepped in Plungis family to remain m until the Moglias had ngis family continued its bration in the court- before leaving.

ght now moves to civil Moglias are seeking



● James Plungis, right, said he was being attacked by more than 20 people that night. "I didn't swing (the cymbal stand) to kill anybody."

JOE McLAUGHLIN
Staff Photographer



Staff graphic

The EPA's cleanup effort targets the Hamilton Industrial Park, a 25-acre tract bounded by Hamilton Boulevard, Spicer Avenue and a tributary to the Bound Brook.

CLEANUP ORDERED

EPA sees health risk at property

By SARAH GREENBLATT
STAFF WRITER

Hamilton Industrial Park might be put on the federal Superfund cleanup list, based on an Environmental Protection Agency report that contamination there poses a public health risk.

SOUTH PLAINFIELD

Soil samples at the 25-acre site, formerly occupied by Cornell-Dubilier Electronics, registered polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, at levels thousands of times greater than acceptable standards, along with potentially hazardous concentrations of lead and cadmium, according to the EPA report, completed in January.

Federal guidelines set safe limits

Please see PCBs, page A2

Employees voice concerns. B4

Rack and his wife, Valerie Iola — and that they plan to file an appeal. Reitman said he did not know yesterday if that appeal had been filed.

Superior Court Judge Helen Hoens ruled last week that the Bridgewater couple will keep "Baby D" during a court-appointed transition period but will have to give him up to his natural father.

Rack and Iola, as well as the attorneys, are barred from discussing the case by a gag order imposed by Hoens. Reitman said the couple also will look into the gag order to ascertain its duration and limitations.

boy to give him a good home, which he would not have received otherwise.

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Legal experts have said New Jersey law favors birth parents in adoption disputes and does not consider the child's welfare as an issue unless the birth parent has abused, neglected or abandoned the child.

tance to defray the couple's legal costs.

Rack and Iola, who have no other children, have said they adopted the boy to give him a

slaughter.

In acquitting Plungis of all charges, including assault and weapons offenses, the jury accepted defense attorney Michael Querques' argument that Plungis swung the cymbals stand in self-defense. Querques said Plungis feared for his life, and Moglia was killed accidentally when the tripod base came loose, flew 15 feet and struck him in the head.

Moglia's skull was crushed, and part of the tripod became embedded in his brain. He died Oct. 1, 1994, at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick.

more than 20 patrons when he swung the cymbals stand. "I didn't swing it to kill anybody," he said. Plungis said he did not know the tripod would come loose.

Querques argued that Moglia died because of the violent atmosphere created by the "bully club of South Amboy," which Querques described as a group of vicious, violent youth in a drunken frenzy.

Plungis, Querques said, became a target of the "bullies" because he was either "a good Samaritan or a damned fool" when he came to the aid of another patron whom the group had knocked into a drum set.

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PCBs: Contamination, health risk seen in industrial park

■ Continued from page A1

for PCBs and lead at two parts per million and 600 ppm respectively. According to the report, PCB concentrations were as high as 51,000 ppm and lead concentrations were as high as 66,700 ppm in some samples tested last summer.

The site has been determined to pose "an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, welfare or the environment," according to an administrative order sent by the EPA to the current property owner, D.S.C. of Newark Enterprises.

PCBs, which can get into the body through dust inhalation, skin contact or ingestion, have been found to irritate the eyes and skin and to damage the liver and the immune system, the report states. Cadmium is a cancer-causing agent; lead causes brain damage.

The site, which was occupied from 1936 to 1962 by Cornell-Dubilier, is bounded by Hamilton Boulevard, by

an unnamed stream that flows into the Bound Brook and by Spicer Avenue.

The industrial park, which includes about 15 industrial plants and warehouses, abuts few homes. The EPA report notes, however, that 500 homes are within a quarter-mile of the site.

Although the most severe contamination has been found within a fenced area at the site, the report also found high levels of PCBs along a foot and bike path adjacent to the property.

With some contaminants found on and near the soil surface, the report said airborne dust particles pose the most immediate health risk to workers in the 15 businesses on the site.

The report noted that PCB concentrations of 350 to 700 ppm have been found in sediment of the nearby stream.

The contamination poses "a potential for acute direct toxicity impacts to wildlife," the report said, noting that the site is within a half mile of 34 acres of wetlands and a stream that empties into areas used for fishing,

such as Bound Brook and New Market Pond.

Because of concern about high concentrations of PCBs in the area closest to the former electronics manufacturing facility, the borough in October revoked the license of a truck-driving school that had been operating in an enclosed portion of the property.

Borough Health Officer Mike Bonk said, however, that local officials were unaware of the extent of the contamination outside the enclosed area until additional information began trickling in from the EPA in November.

"We weren't aware of any acute hazard for people going through the area," Bonk said.

The EPA has ordered D.S.C. to "stabilize" the site, said agency spokeswoman Mary Mears.

Mears said the agency will require the owner to put up fences and warning signs around the hazardous area and pave the entry to the commercial center. The entry now is a dirt road that contains high levels of PCBs, lead and cadmium, according to the EPA report.

The property owner also must create a drainage ditch to prevent contaminated runoff from leaving the site, Mears said.

Following completion of those short-term measures and pending further investigation of the site, Mears said the current and previous owners may be ordered to carry out a more extensive cleanup.

Officials from D.S.C. and Cornell-Dubilier did not return calls made, seeking comment.

EPA investigators said the contaminants may have been dumped onto the site soils by the electronics firm, according to the report.

The EPA first was alerted about the site in the mid-1980s by representatives of the state Department of Environmental Protection, representatives of both agencies said yesterday.

EPA spokesman Rich Cahill said that at the time, other sites posed more significant environmental risks and were given higher priority for agency intervention.